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Letter dated 3 June 2003 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 28 May 2003, which I received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

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Annex

Letter dated 28 May 2003 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 1088 (1996), I attach the monthly report on Stabilization Force operations for April 2003 (see enclosure). I would appreciate it if you would make the report available to the United Nations Security Council.

(*Signed*) George **Robertson**

Enclosure

Monthly report to the United Nations on Stabilization Force operations

Status line

1. Over the reporting period (1 to 30 April 2003) there were just over 12,800 troops deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.

2. During the period under review, the overall situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina remained stable.

3. On 6 April, the Stabilization Force (SFOR) inspected a tunnel near Kladanj. A satchel containing 20 pounds of plastic explosives was discovered buried in the wall of the tunnel. An SFOR explosive ordnance disposal team deactivated the charges. Other tunnels in the vicinity were checked, but no other devices were found.

Security

4. SFOR continues to: contribute to the maintenance of a safe and secure environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina; collect weapons and ammunition in the framework of Operation Harvest; conduct an information campaign aimed at persuading civilians to voluntarily surrender weapons; conduct targeted searches aimed at deliberately hidden weapons caches; and monitor possible terrorist-related threats throughout the country.

5. The total number of items collected during the month under Operation Harvest included: 900 small arms (rifles, pistols and revolvers); 294,368 rounds of ammunition less than 20 millimetres; 355 rounds of ammunition between 20 and 76 millimetres; 264 rounds of ammunition greater than 76 millimetres; 5,559 hand grenades; 258 mines; 110.5 kilograms of explosives; and 3,597 other items (mortars, mortar rounds, rifle grenades, attack rockets and hand-made ordnance). There was an increase in the number of weapons surrendered voluntarily and in the information provided on hidden weapons caches.

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

6. On 10 April, SFOR detained Naser Oric, a Bosniac, who was under a sealed indictment by the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia for war crimes committed during the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Oric, who is charged with violations of the laws or customs of war, including murder, cruel treatment, wanton destruction and plunder, was transferred to The Hague on 11 April.

7. On 15 April, President Dragan Cavic requested the assistance of SFOR in the conduct of a weapons amnesty similar to Operation Harvest, aimed at eliminating illegal weapons in the Republika Srpska. During its spring 2003 Operation Harvest campaign, SFOR acknowledged the proposals from both entities for a national campaign and proposed that an operation be initiated by the Tri-Presidency and conducted through the Bosnia and Herzegovina chain of command in cooperation with the local police. SFOR will monitor the activity.

8. On 22 April, SFOR hosted a meeting between the Minister of Defence of the Federation and the Chiefs of General Staff of the Army of the Federation of Bosnia

and Herzegovina (VF) and the Republika Srpska Army (VRS).[1] The aim of the meeting was to discuss the restructuring of the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as mandated in Lord Ashdown's plan of 2 April, to ensure that the military in Bosnia and Herzegovina comes under effective civilian control. On 25 April, the Stabilization Force Commander sent letters to the Tri-Presidency emphasizing the High Representative's plan to restructure the armed forces and to restrict them to an affordable level by 1 January 2004. Additionally, the plans must also be completed for the destruction or sale of surplus and obsolete weapons and ammunition and the reduction of weapons storage sites to fewer than 10. Finally, the Commander highlighted that the development of the concepts must be in accordance with the objective of the Partnership for Peace membership.[2]

9. The summer de-mining campaign began on 17 March. De-mining teams from the Federation have commenced work, although two teams were delayed due to bad weather conditions. Some of the VRS de-mining teams were on strike following the non-payment of de-mining bonuses since October 2002. SFOR is monitoring this matter with the VRS authorities. The issue of a warning to VRS for non-compliance was being considered by SFOR. De-mining and explosive teams using sniffer dogs were unable to work during the reporting period because of bad weather.

10. During the period under review, SFOR monitored 315 training and movement activities: 159 VRS, and 156 VF. SFOR monitored 198 mine clearing activities in the Federation. SFOR also carried out 48 inspections and verification of weapons storage sites: 20 VRS, and 28 VF.

Cooperation with international organizations

11. Within capabilities and in accordance with its mandate, SFOR continues to provide assistance to the international organizations working in theatre.

Outlook

12. The security situation is expected to continue to be stable.

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[1] The Republika Srpska Defence Minister, Mr. Stankovic, was unable to attend due to the death of his mother.

[2] These concepts include an integrated joint command structure; merging at least part of entity Ministries of Defence into the Standing Committee on Military Matters; merging entity Chiefs of Defence into the Joint General Staff; integrating of joint component structures; considering the need for a reserve force; and considering conscription policy.